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The Golden Triangle

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program of the  
O'Connor Center for the Rocky  
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## Monday,

Oct. 26, 2015

Produced by Shellie Nelson, MW News Editor

[Mountain West Voices](#)

### Editor's notes:

In the **Rockies today**, a promised lawsuit on President Obama's Clean Power Plan and a federal investigation finds a Colorado buyer did indeed ship hundreds of wild horses to slaughter.

Last week, the news that the rule that was at the center of President Obama's Clean Power Plan was published in the Federal Register, putting it on the path to implementation, elicited vows to challenge the rule, and 24 states joined together to file a lawsuit doing so.

Among the 24 are Colorado, Montana, Utah and Wyoming, all of whom have active coal mines and get a substantial amount of their power from coal-fired power plants.

In Colorado, the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Inspector General issued a scathing report on Friday that found Tom Davis, who purchased 1,794 wild horses from the Bureau of Land Management between 2008 and 2012, did indeed send most, if not all, of them to slaughter.

An investigation done by [ProPublica](#) in 2012 raised questions about [Davis](#).

Barbara Theroux reviews [three books](#) that examine the West's

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### Quote of the day:

"There are a substantial number of people who are voluntarily unemployed. At the same time, there are help-wanted signs up everywhere."

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**Tucker Hart Adams**, an economist with Summit Economics in Colorado Springs, discussing the mixed message of "full" employment in Colorado.  
- Denver Post

## Rockies today

### Western states among 24 suing to halt Clean Power Plan rule

The rule at the center of President Obama's Clean Power Plan elicited the promised lawsuit, with 24 states, including Colorado, Montana, Utah and Wyoming, filing the lawsuit on Friday. Fifteen other states, along with Washington, D.C., and New York City, are reportedly going to ask to intervene in the lawsuit on the side of the Environmental Protection Agency in support of the plan.

UPI.com; October 26

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- Wyoming legislative panel rejects bill to block climate change plan

On Friday, the Wyoming Legislature's Joint Minerals, Business and Economic Development Interim Committee voted 9-5 to vote down a proposed bill that would have required legislative approval of any federal regulation or a final federal court approval of such a regulation before it could be implemented in Wyoming. The measure was directly aimed at the core regulation of President Obama's Clean Power Plant designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with each state having a specific target.

Casper Star-Tribune (AP); October 26

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### Interior investigation confirms Colorado buyer shipped wild horses to slaughter

The Department of the Interior's Office of the Inspector General completed its investigation into Tom Davis, a Colorado buyer who bought nearly 1,800 wild horses from the Bureau of Land Management between 2008 and 2012 for around \$10 apiece, and found that Davis did ship those horses to slaughter in Mexico. Davis apparently told investigators that he believed BLM officials knew he was buying them for slaughter, given the number of horses he was buying.

Denver Post; October 23

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### Colorado, Idaho, Montana senators support Federal Lands Act

The Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, which allowed the sale of some public lands in the West to allow the purchase of conservation lands, expired in 2011, but a bipartisan group of Western senators are supporting a bill to bring the program back, with Colorado U.S. Sens. Michael Bennet and Cory Gardner, Idaho Sen. Mike Crapo and Montana U.S. Sens. Steve Daines and Jon Tester among its supporters.

Durango Herald; October 26

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## Owner of mine in Colorado reminds state of \$10M cleanup offer

The Sunnyside mine network in Colorado near Silverton is thought to be the source of water that is pouring out of other mines, including the Gold King Mine, where a cleanup operation in August let loose a torrent of contaminated water into the Animas River, and the owner of the Sunnyside Gold Corp. has long offered to pay \$10 million for a lime treatment plant to treat water if the company can be released from further liability.

Durango Herald; October 26

## Montana wildlife commission OKs 4th annual elk-brucellosis plan

Over the past three years, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Department of Livestock has spent \$847,000 to keep elk from spreading brucellosis to cattle, with FWP contributing \$214,000 of that, and at a meeting earlier this month, the state Wildlife Commission approved the fourth annual elk-brucellosis plan, which allows landowners to select some of the hunters allowed to hunt on their lands to remove elk. Last year there were no reported cases of brucellosis in cattle in the Designated Surveillance Area, the four southwestern counties in Montana that border Yellowstone National Park.

Flathead Beacon (Billings Gazette); October 24

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## Former USFS officials urge cancellation of energy lease in Montana

Nineteen former U.S. Forest Service officials, including former Lewis and Clark National Forest Supervisor Gloria Flora and retired Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth, wrote to U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, urging that all energy leases in the Badger-Two Medicine area of Montana, which is considered sacred by the Blackfeet Tribe, be cancelled.

Flathead Beacon; October 26

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## Montana DEQ ahead of schedule on dam cleanup, seek to expand project

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality is ahead of schedule on removing the old earthen Mike Horse Dam and the mining waste held back by the dam, as well as other areas contaminated by the former lead, zinc, gold and silver mine, and on Oct. 28, DEQ officials will hold an informational meeting in Lincoln about its proposal to expand the cleanup.

Missoulian; October 26

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## Colorado workers have a different take on 'full' employment

In September, Colorado's jobless rate fell to 3.3 percent, a level that is considered full employment and metro Denver's unemployment fell to 3.2 percent, but unlike previous periods of full employment in the Centennial State, this period comes at a time when just 66 percent of adults are employed, compared to 72 percent during the last two booms, the median household wage in Denver has fallen from \$66,316 in 2000 and \$69,812 in 2007 to \$60,940 last year, at a time when rental rates increased 50 percent during the second quarter of the year.

Denver Post; October 26

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## **Water**

### Montana Resources has a plan for Berkeley Pit water

A new plan was announced by Montana Resources, the company that runs the copper mine in Butte, that, beginning in 2023, the mine will use treated Berkeley Pit water in its mining operations, and not send the water down into Silver Bow Creek.

Helena Independent Record; October 26

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## Opinion

### Utah congressmen right to pursue EPA after Gold King Mine spill

The Interior Department's investigation into the Gold King Mine spill left no doubt that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was at fault for the Colorado gold mine spill, which not only colored the Animas River orange, but added depth and context to the distrust felt against the federal government.

Salt Lake Tribune; October 26

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## Beyond the region

### Renewable energy installations energize battery industry

The need to store electricity created by intermittent systems like wind and solar power is driving new developments in storage systems, and while the cost of installing such systems is now around \$500 per kilowatt hour, and U.S. agencies estimate that that cost needs to be around \$100 to \$150 per kilowatt hour to reach widespread use, those systems are growing in number, especially in states where wind and solar installations are numerous.

New York Times; October 26

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## **On the Bookshelf**

wildfires, issues

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changing workplace demands

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